

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Previously Presented) A method of mounting a retaining ring on a rotating electric starter shaft of an electric starter drive assembly that includes a self-disengaging coupling device acting between a bushing and a pinion, the bushing and the shaft having splines that cooperate, the shaft having a first rear stop and a second front stop spaced apart thereon to define a course along which the starter drive assembly slides between a rest and a working position, said first rear stop being formed by an elastic retaining ring inserted into an annular positioning groove of the shaft, the method comprising:
  - mounting the retaining ring on an axial segment of the shaft in an accessible mounting area between the positioning groove and the splines; and
  - moving the starter drive assembly axially toward the rest position so as to move the retaining ring along the axial segment of the shaft to the positioning groove, which is located in a service area with no radial access.
2. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The mounting method according to claim 1, wherein the service area is disposed beneath a protrusion of a speed reducer.
3. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The mounting method according to claim 1, wherein a shaft segment with a cross section that increases toward the positioning groove is used.
4. – 10. (Canceled)
11. (New) The mounting method according to claim 3, wherein a diameter of the shaft is close or equal to a diameter acceptable by the retaining ring without elastic deformation of the retaining ring.
12. (New) The mounting method according to claim 2, wherein the service area is disposed beneath a plurality of protrusions, wherein at least one protrusion is shorter than other protrusions of the plurality of protrusions.